

# ACCEPTANCE

OF

## THE REPUBLICAN NOMINATION FOR CONGRESS

BY

# HON. WILLIAM D. KELLEY,

*(Revised from the "Evening Telegraph" of June 16.)*

Last evening Hon. WILLIAM D. KELLEY was officially informed of his unanimous renomination as the Republican candidate from the fourth congressional district of Pennsylvania to Congress. The committee appointed to wait on him found Judge KELLEY still confined to his bed, and just convalescing after a serious illness of some weeks' duration. Rev. JAMES NEILL, chairman of the committee, and delegation of prominent citizens present, addressed Judge KELLEY in substance, as follows:

Judge KELLEY: We have been appointed to inform you of your unanimous choice, for the fifth time, by the citizens of the fourth congressional district, to represent them in the Congress of the United States. They have observed carefully and with great pleasure and admiration your public course, and in the resolutions you have read indicate their trust in regard to the future. Your past position and conduct is the all-sufficient guarantee in regard to your future course.

We have, as citizens, seen and felt the wisdom of Mr. Lincoln's assertion with reference to the people of the country, when he said that, "We were not disposed to trade horses in the middle of the stream." We feel that the war is not yet quite ended. Lee has been conquered, but Andrew Johnson is still in the field. And while Grant will lead one great section of the Army, we look to WILLIAM D. KELLEY to lead the other, until the arrant President shall ground his arms and the flag of the country, the emblem of the pious principles of republicanism, shall float untainted by the touch or contaminated by one word of Andrew Johnson.

Judge KELLEY responded, as follows:

I regret, gentlemen, that you have been called to my bedside to perform the duty of communicating to me official information of the honor done me by the Republican congressional convention of this district. Were I in my most vigorous health I would feel with deep emotion the honor done me by this fifth consecutive nomination to the Congress of the United States by so intelligent and patriotic a constituency as that of the fourth district of Pennsylvania. The application of the terms "intelligent and patriotic" to the people of this district are not idle compliments! No stranger can traverse it without seeing that it is the home of intelligence and prosperity, and the records of the war tell plainly enough the story of the patriotism of its people.

Lying here for nearly a fortnight, I have found pleasure and profit in reviewing the events of the historical period during which I have had the honor of being your Representative. When first elected, in 1860, the southern States, some of them, still had Representatives in Congress. I have held debate with gentlemen who left our Congress to enter that of the confederacy. Few believed at that time that there would be war. I confess that I did. From the date of the repeal of the Missouri compromise I could not see how, under God's providence, the great problems before the American people could be solved otherwise than by the issue of war, and I looked upon the struggles in Kansas as the preliminary stages of a great war.

When, in response to Mr. Lincoln's proclamation calling an extra session of Congress, I took my seat some months earlier than the

constitutionally appointed time, it was to provide for war, which was then raging. The right to coerce the South was then disputed, and the power to coerce the South doubted. Our Navy, except four of the smallest vessels, was either laid up in ordinary or dismantled or in the most distant seas; our Army was in Texas and New Mexico, whence they must come to us through the enemy's country, as you remember they did, disarmed, and paroled never to fight against an organized enemy who occupied nearly a million square miles of our most fertile territory. No chapter in history equals that which has intervened. Half the people of the country, or rather the people of the more populous half of the country, raised armies such as the world never saw, in point of numbers, character of the individuals who composed them, courage, persistency, discipline, and in the results attained. Men who were then utterly unknown even in the neighborhoods in which they lived are illustrious evermore for their deeds in the battles of the war. We all remember one of our neighbors, the quiet banker, David B. Birney; and some of us remember the effort he made, as lieutenant colonel, to muster a regiment of men. It was permitted him to die in his home, surrounded by wife and family. He had come to perform the patriotic duty of casting a Republican vote, and death seized him in his home, though it had spared him among the glories of Chantilly, where his gallant leadership saved the day after his beloved commander, Kearney, and the gallant Stevens, his senior major general, had fallen. Thousands of instances there were as memorable as this.

When you first elected me to Congress Ulysses S. Grant was quietly pursuing the business of a tanner, yet his name is enduringly entwined with those of the purest patriots and ablest soldiers of the world. I know him, and I know that his name will shine as pure and illustrious in the roll of statesmen as it does in the roll of soldiers, though so much has been done by Congress, notwithstanding the veto power, in the work of reconstruction that it may not hold the conspicuous position in the list of civilians that it does among the Washingtons and Wellingtons of the world. And above the names even of Collingwood and Nelson I write, and believe history will write, those of Farragut and Porter; for I remember no

naval actions that depended so much upon the will and power of one man, backed by the intelligence, discipline, and pluck of subordinates, as those which Farragut and Porter conducted.

Another aspect of the case is scarcely less remarkable. I allude to the manner in which the people applied their energies to the support of the Government. An Army and Navy adequate to all our purposes sprang from the hands and homes of our own people, and they paid taxes liberally enough to create a credit by which to maintain and support them in the field and on the ocean and do by them, in home and hospital, as no nation ever did by its soldiers and sailors. They paid in customs and internal duties, in our currency, in a single year the enormous sum of \$600,000,000—not, be it remembered, the whole people of the country, because the South was prostrated and the North was feeding both the white and black people of the South through the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands.

Let me point to another most striking feature! The war closed in April, 1865, and I am speaking to you in June, 1868, after a lapse of little more than three years. The Army and Navy must be reduced; but both had to be maintained and paid while the reductions were taking place. Bounties were to be provided, pensions had to be given, and liberally, and the funds provided for them, and all this has been done; and yet the Republican party of the country, as if inspired by Divine wisdom, while accomplishing all this, has paid in these three years \$300,000,000 of the principal of the public debt. History is challenged in vain for any such proportionate payment of a national debt in so brief a period, even in time of profoundest peace. Yes, gentlemen, with the Army and Navy to be paid until they could be reduced, with pensions and bounties to be provided for, we have paid, nevertheless, annually since the close of the war, \$100,000,000 of the principal of the public debt; and what is still more remarkable, have while doing so relieved the people annually of \$100,000,000 of taxation. The Thirty-Ninth Congress, at its first session, repealed taxes which had yielded the year before \$60,000,000. At its next it repealed taxes which had yielded the year previous \$40,000,000; and the Fortieth



Congress has already repealed taxes which yielded last year \$90,000,000, and notwithstanding all this, we will pay this year very nearly if not quite \$100,000,000 of the public debt. And I confidently predict that the present Congress will reduce the expenditures of the country so, that the revenue required to pay the interest of the public debt, the current expenses of the Government, and to provide for a moderate payment on account of the principal will be had by relying on customs, which will not be less than \$170,000,000 annually; on taxes derived from stamps, banks, gross receipts of railroads, and successions; and from whisky, so far reduced as to make fraud vastly less of a temptation than it is, and with reductions of the taxes on tobacco and malt liquors also.

I have not a shadow of doubt of the correctness of this proposition. Its fulfillment is guaranteed by the steady immigration, rapidly increasing wealth of the country, and the astounding increase in the productive and consuming capacity of our people. We receive three hundred thousand emigrants a year. We have fresh lands, mines of coal, iron, copper, silver, gold, and all other minerals to employ them upon. We have raised into freemen, by the war and by the wisdom, Heaven-inspired, of the Republican party, four million people, who formerly consumed no dutiable or taxable goods. Many of them are now landholders; all of them are aspiring to establish homes, and willing to labor to do this and to make their homes comfortable and beautiful, and will, under this new inspiration, prove that they have all the generous desires that animate the mass of the American people, and in accomplishing their holy desires will contribute to the resources of the country. Not only have we redeemed those who were slaves, but we have also redeemed six millions of the poor whites of the South, whose hovels were as abject, and whose lives were as innocent of any knowledge of taxable or dutiable goods as those who were slaves. You answer, "No, you are mistaken in this; the slave-owner was the consumer for all these people." I tell you that many of the slave-owners did not consume as many taxable or dutiable goods in their families as any of you do in yours; and many of the freedmen and of the poor whites will in the

next year make contributions to the support of the Government as large as those the master class made prior to the war.

The era in which we live is a new one. The past furnishes no experience to guide the financial and business transactions of the future. A fortnight ago I obtained leave of absence that I might come home and have the care of my family during my illness, and during this brief fortnight I have seen the oldest and most populous nation of the world led, as it were, by a little child—a young statesman of our country—eastward toward our own country, to enter as a member for the first time in the world's history the great family of nations. China seeks relations with the commercial world at the hand of an American statesman, and makes her first international association with the American people. Anson Burlingame, the Yankee envoy, will then bring her into relations with all the world. Thus an American statesman goes China's ambassador to all the nations of the world. But, gentlemen, this brief fortnight has brought to my attention a still more striking illustration of the progress of the time. There has been brought to my chamber the news that the Sultan of Turkey has at last constituted what we might call a House of Congress and Supreme Court, and a system of judicature for his people. These movements are all under the American impulse. The idea uttered by Jefferson, and adopted by our whole people, that "government was for the good of the governed, and only rests firmly and justly on the consent of the governed," has been accepted and has produced its results in China and Turkey. It is now for us, our idea having inspired them, to give them an illustration of its practical effect. To do that we must see that in our broad land there shall be no man, not convicted of crime or subject to idiocy, who shall not possess every political right and power that the proudest and wisest enjoy. Thus the weak can protect themselves.

To prove the beneficence of our institutions we must remember that the majority of our people live by their labor, and that their labor quickens into use our inert raw materials. In Belgium and France the best mechanics are paid but from two to five francs a day, and in England they get but the same number of shillings. American workmen cannot main-

tain homes and educate their children on such wages, and we must protect them against the competition of the underpaid and oppressed workmen of these and other lands. I thank the convention for its generous notice of my labors in this behalf, and promise to continue them as long as I shall remain in Congress. To improve the condition of the laborers of the country has been the ambition of my life.

Accepting the honor of your nomination, I propose to indicate what my course shall be in the language, strange to say, of the Sultan of Turkey. I mean to be in the Forty-First Congress, if elected, as I have no doubt I shall be, as radical as I have been in the Thirty-Seventh, Thirty-Eighth, Thirty-Ninth, and Fortieth. I mean to act upon these wise suggestions of the Sultan of Turkey, who, on the 10th of last month, when inaugurating the Council of State and the High Court of Justice, said:

"The duty of the State consists in protecting, under all circumstances, the right of each of its members to liberty.

"Every law, every regulation of the Government, derives its legitimate character from its conduciveness to the public well being.

"And the more nearly the laws of the State, as a system and in their details, are the inspirations of justice and equity, the more nearly will the State

fulfill its mission; for not only authority but justice should be the refuge and the support of the unfortunate and oppressed."

I have said that I know General Grant. I also know Schuyler Colfax, and I honor and love him for the high qualities which have secured him the esteem and confidence of so large a portion of our fellow-citizens. He is justly the idol of Indiana, and those who know him best love and honor him most. It will give me pleasure to bear their honored names through the district in the coming canvass, and where ever and whenever I may feel that I can lend the good cause any aid. That they will be triumphantly elected I am quite sure, for I feel that the North and South agree with Grant in believing that what the country now needs is peace!

Thanking you for the honor you have done me, and expressing through you to the members of the convention my gratitude for the honor they did me, and the kind opinions they were pleased to embody in their resolutions, I apologize for having so far taxed your patience, begging that you will remember that if I have been garrulous I have but indulged the privilege of the sick-room.